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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [PGOV](#) [MK](#) [GR](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH PROMOTE COMPROMISE, BUT WON'T PRESSURE
GREECE ON MACEDONIA NAME ISSUE

REF: STATE 40462

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt,
for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In response to reftel, Post has raised with various French officials the need to urge the Greeks to renew their commitment to finding a mutually acceptable solution to the Macedonia name issue. However, in the post-Bucharest environment, French officials have not retreated from their earlier position on Macedonia; namely, that they hope a compromise will be found on the name issue, but they refuse to put any pressure on Greece. In general, officials in the Elysee, MOD and MFA are sensitive to Greece's domestic political considerations and reiterate that it is up to Macedonia to make the necessary compromises, as Macedonia is the one seeking to join the Alliance. In an April 18 meeting with Francois Richier, Strategic Affairs Advisor to President Sarkozy, he stated that the question is not one of capability or Balkan stability, but rather a question of solidarity with a key ally. He noted that in the past, Greece has stood firmly with France on issues when France made it clear that its vital national interests were at stake. France intends to do the same for its Greek ally in this case. He further noted that some of the proposals previously rejected by Macedonia had been quite reasonable, and it is up to Skopje to make an effort. These views were echoed in the MFA when Nicolas Niemtchinow, DAS-equivalent in the Strategic Affairs bureau, repeatedly emphasized that the alliance cannot "twist the arm" of a fellow ally, adding that, as enlargement is subject to national ratification by member countries, it is not in the interest of the Alliance to force the Greek government to agree to a compromise that it cannot sustain domestically. These comments echo statements in President Sarkozy's speech at Bucharest, in which he stated that when joining an alliance, a country must make "a minimum of effort" (referring to Macedonia). The above views are widely held in the Elysee, MFA and MOD, and Post sees little possibility that this posture will change in the near future, although we continue to urge our interlocutors to advocate a compromise with both Greece and Macedonia.

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